ADULT LEARNING IN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

Peter Jarvis

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PETER JARVIS

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To
Maureen,
Frazer and Kierra,
In Gratitude

Preface

> There can be few intellectual quests that, for educators, and trainers
> of adults, assume so much significance and yet contain so little
> promise of successful completion as the search for a general theory
> of adult learning. Kidd (1973) has compared the quest to the search
> for Eldorado . . . Learning activities and learning styles vary so
> much with physiology, culture, and personality that generalized
> statements about the nature of adult learning have very low predic-
> tive power. (Brookfield, 1986, p. 25)

The above was published at about the time this book was in an early
draft and it also echoes the sentiments of this author. While the pur-
suit of Eldorado may be a never-ending task, it does not prevent some
people embarking upon it. This study is no more than a very tenta-
tive attempt to plot one or two other possible approaches to the quest.
It certainly does not seek to provide authoritative answers, indeed
it might merely be regarded as an exercise in asking even more ques-
tions. Even so, it is hoped that the questions asked and some of the
suggestions made might prove helpful to others who are seeking to
understand more fully how adults learn.

   This book was not written without considerable help from col-
leagues and fellow students. Dr Maureen Pope, from the University
of Surrey, read an early draft of the first three chapters; Dr John
Peters, from the University of Tennessee, also read the first three
chapters; Dr Mark Tennant, from Sydney College of Advanced Educa-
tion, read the second chapter; Dr Roy Ingham from Florida State
University spent a great deal of time talking with me and also reading
a paper which constitutes part of the fourth chapter. Other colleagues
have heard some of the earlier parts of the book when they have been
presented as seminar papers and they have also made helpful com-
ments, which have been taken into consideration in the final draft.
I am grateful to all of them for their time and consideration. Unfor-
tunately, few of the later chapters have been exposed to such scrutiny,
from which they would have no doubt benefited a great deal.

   In addition, gratitude is expressed to David Boud, from the Univer-
sity of New South Wales, for permission to reproduce his model of
the reflective process. Thanks must also be given to all of those people
who participated in the workshops from which the model of the learn-
ing processes was devised and upon which this book is based and,

in addition, to the many colleagues and students who have participated in seminars that have explored some of these issues since the model was produced and who have made insightful comments and suggestions about adult learning.

My family, to whom this book is dedicated, have suffered most during its preparation and to them I must extend my deep gratitude for their forebearance during the whole of the period.

The book itself is divided into four sections: the first two chapters constitute the basis of the work, examining the state of some of the learning theory and, thereafter, discussing the way that this model of learning was devised; the next four chapters discuss fairly fully the elements of the model; Chapters 7 to 9 examine the different forms of learning that emerged from the research and relate them to their social context; the last chapter relates some of the foregoing to the art of teaching adults. Finally, there is a bibliography containing full references to all the works cited in this study.

Many colleagues and friends have provided the ideas that have gone into the preparation of this book and without which it could not have been written, and to all of them I am extremely grateful, although none of them can take any blame for the finished product! I only hope that it might prove helpful to some in seeking to understand the process of adult learning a little better and, perhaps, to others to enable them to facilitate the adult learning process a little differently.

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The Social Context of Adult Learning

The less complete and fixed the instinctual equipment of animals,
the more developed is the brain and therefore the ability to learn.
The emergence of man can be defined as occurring at the point
in the process of evolution where instinctive adaptation has reach-
ed its minimum. But he emerges with new qualities which differen-
tiate him from the animal: his awareness of himself as a separate
entity, his ability to remember the past, to visualise the future, and
to denote objects and acts by symbols; his reason to conceive and
understand the world; and his imagination through which he reaches
far beyond the range of his senses. Man is the most helpless of
animals, but this very biological weakness is the basis of his
strength, the prime cause of his specifically human qualities.
(Fromm, 1949, p. 39)

At the heart of life itself is the process of learning. It would be easy
to assume that conscious living and learning are synonymous
processes, but it will be argued later that this is not so. Never-
theless, they are very close to each other and constantly overlap.
Learning occurs in a variety of modes: formal, informal, non-formal
directed, self-directed, open, distance, etc. With few exceptions,
e.g. Woodruff (1968), teaching rather than learning has occupied the
academic stage until recently and the central place in educational
theory, but in recent years learning has assumed a more prominent
role. Books about learning have begun to appear in initial education,
e.g. Entwistle (1981), higher education (Marton *et al.*, eds, 1984),
lifelong learning (Knapper and Cropley, 1985) and adult education,
which has emphasised learning for a longer period of time than
has most branches of education, e.g. Kidd (1973), Cross (1981).
However, some of these studies tend to restrict learning to that

which occurs within the traditional educational context.

Most learning theory in adult education has taken a predominantly psychological perspective, which is not surprising since adult education has been concerned with both adult development and traditional approaches to learning. This merely reflects the fact that education generally has emphasised the cognitive psychological approach to learning and, in addition, Piaget's studies of cognitive development have also played a significant role. This study, however, is more concerned to examine the learning processes from a social perspective. Such an approach is by no means a new one to learning theory, since some of the phenomenologists of the past, notably Schutz, and more recent writers on adult education, such as Freire, have produced implicit studies of human learning from this perspective. This approach is not to deny the significance of the psychological, indeed considerable reference is made to it here, but to complement it.

This analysis clearly draws upon the work of the above writers *inter alia* but also upon some of the author's own research. However, learning is a tremendously complex phenomenon, as the following pages illustrate, so that this study does not endeavour to be more than an initial attempt at understanding adult learning from this perspective. However, it is important from the outset to clarify a number of fundamental issues: three present themselves as being sufficiently significant to merit immediate attention: the concept of learning; adult learning within the context of this study: the social dimension of learning. These points constitute the discussion of this opening chapter.

INITIAL CONSIDERATION OF THE CONCEPT OF LEARNING

The concept of knowledge has been of greater significance to the philosophers than has been the process whereby that knowledge has been acquired, which is not really surprising, since there has often been greater interest in the product than the process in society as a whole. But it is significant that knowledge is being suggested here as at least a product of learning since some of the classical definitions of learning in psychology have omitted the process altogether. Borger and Seaborne (1966, p. 14), for example, define learning as 'any more or less permanent change in behaviour which is the result of experience'. In a similar vein, Hilgard and Atkinson (1967 ed, p. 270) define it as 'a relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of practice'. There is only an apparent difference between these two definitions since 'experience' and 'practice' appear

to be used synonymously, although they are entirely different phenomena as will become apparent throughout this study. That these definitions are similar is best demonstrated by pointing out that in a later edition of their book Hilgard, Atkinson and Atkinson (1979, p. 190) actually substitute experience for practice in their definition. The similarity of these definitions is to be found in their behavioural nature, both are concerned to note that a change in behaviour has occurred — a product. Now there is an obvious link between behaviourism and certain forms of empirical sociology that seek to measure phenomena quantitatively and objectively, but such an approach is not advocated here for a number of reasons. An initial criticism of the behavioural definitions is that they specify that learning is the product of a particular process, namely behaviour modification, whereas learning is both a process and a product. Secondly, as well as having a behavioural component it may also be a cognitive, or an affective, or a cognitive and affective, process and none of these need be identified with a behavioural outcome. Indeed, there can even be some situations where the learner knows (cognitive) and wishes (affective) to change a behaviour pattern as a result of some learning process, but is aware that the management of the occupational organisation, or the peer group, would frown upon such behaviour, so that the learner consciously does not act in accord with the learning that has occurred. But failure to act does not deny that learning has actually occurred, and in the case of this illustration learning has occurred in a number of ways, including that of recognising what would be regarded as acceptable behaviour within the social setting. Learning may result in, but cannot be identified with, behavioural change. Consequently, the behaviourist definitions contain too many logical fallacies to be accepted here. Borger and Seaborne (1966, p. 16) are not unaware of this problem but claim that 'our judgement of whether any learning has taken place must ultimately rest on making some sort of observations'. However, this attempt to defend the definition only compounds the problems, since learners may assess their own learning, which may actually be far more accurate than any of the present methods of assessment utilised in education. However, there is a far more damaging criticism of this defence since, ultimately, it is claiming that the conceptualisation of any phenomenon must be limited to the methods used to study it, which is totally illogical, since the logical outcome of such a position must be that phenomena only exist when they are discovered!

Borger and Seaborne (1966, p. 18) are aware, however, that cognitive processes do exist and that they are significant to learning:

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. . . it is important to remember that the organism does have an 'inside', and whatever explanations we put forward to account for change in behaviour will, in the long run, have to fit in with what we can discover, by different means, about the working of the inside.

However, Skinner (1971) would dispute this, since he argued that what is going on inside individuals is no more than a response to their environment. Even thought itself, which he (1971, p. 189) considered to be 'the last stronghold of autonomous man', is no more than a product of the environment, in his opinion. While this argument has certain attractions, there seem to be some crucial flaws to his position and three of these will be raised here. First, if a person can be taught to think critically and also to be autonomous, then it is difficult to maintain that what is going on within a person in subsequent situations is merely the result of the environment, or determined by previous experiences. Secondly, if Kohlberg's (1973) research on the stages of moral development has any substance, then that stage of being autonomous or acting on principles would seem to stand in contradistinction to Skinner's position. Thirdly, there are a number of methodological problems about behavioural research that will be examined in more detail here.

Watson, the founding father of behaviourism, studied both animals and children and came to the conclusion that 'stimulus-response (S-R) connections are more likely to be established the more frequently or recently an S-R bond occurs' (Child, 1981, pp. 84–5). However, and quite significantly, Watson also noted that children make many unsuccessful attempts before they arrive at a correct solution and that, having arrived at one, other attempts were not made. Hence, a logical outcome of this finding is that children actually learn that their attempts are not correct, so that they are experimenting all the time and, therefore, learning all the time. Such a conclusion would be in accord with Kelly's (1963) claim that the human being is ultimately a scientist seeking to predict and control through experimentation.

Perhaps the most well known of all psychological research into learning, although not now the most frequently utilised approach, is that of Pavlov (1927), who proposed the theory of classical conditioning. Briefly, this claims that the learner is conditioned (learns ?) to associate the presentation of a reward with a stimulus that occurs fractionally prior to it. Thus Pavlov's dogs salivated at the sound of a bell, since they had been fed on previous occasions when the bell sounded. This form of conditioning appears to be limited to reflex

mechanisms and emotional reactions, but if there is a cognitive element then this must also be seen as part of the process. Hence, children learn to look forward to Mrs X teaching them because she has previously created a nice, warm friendly atmosphere in the classroom. While this might not have been the intention of the class teacher, the process has been similar. This is the same as Knowles' (1984, pp. 14–17) recognition of the importance of setting suitable climate in which adults may learn. By contrast, operant conditioning occurs when the response is actually shaped by the rewards so that after every occasion when the response approaches, approximates to or achieves the desired behaviour, the child receives a sweet, or the adult is praised for a very good attempt, etc. Operant conditioning was expounded by Skinner (1953), whose initial research was with rats and pigeons. Child (1981, p. 89) neatly summarises Skinner's conclusions about learning:

- each step in the learning process should be short and grow out of previously learned behaviour
- in the early stages, learning should be rewarded regularly and, thereafter, it should be controlled by a schedule of reinforcement
- reward should follow rapidly on feedback
- the learner should be given the opportunity to discover stimulus discriminations for the most likely path to success.

Obviously, Skinner and other behaviourists seem more concerned to discover the technology whereby a correct response can be learned rather than understanding the learning process *per se*. Additionally, they have done so with animals and children; with the former, no mechanisms exist to discover the content of their thought processes, if there are any, and with the latter little or no attempt was made to find out what they were thinking . Since the researchers were also adults, the child learners were placed in a controlled environment which thereby created the conditions to produce conformity. This is a similar point to the one that Yonge (1985) raised when he sought to distinguish andragogy from pedagogy on the grounds that a different form of teacher-learner relationship exists between adult learner-teacher and child learner-teacher and that the former may be more egalitarian than the latter.

Thus it may be concluded that behaviourism is based upon a number of suspect premises and that some of its conclusions about learning may be too sweeping for its own research design. Hence, the behaviourist definition of learning is rejected here. It would now

perhaps be possible, although rather tedious, to examine every other school of psychology in the same manner, seeking a definition that is acceptable. Such a procedure was decided against here, rather a perspective almost diametrically opposed to the behaviourist one was chosen to examine next; that of the experientialist writer, David Kolb (1984).

Kolb, like Borger and Seaborne, is interested in experience, but he highlights those forms of learning that begin with experience and those which begin with the cognitive and are then tested through experience. He discusses these two processes, which he calls apprehension and comprehension: the former he regards as the grasping of an experience while the latter is the cognitive mode that results from the transformation of experience into knowledge. Hence, he seeks to combine these into a single definition of learning, which is 'the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). Clearly, less empirical research evidence has been conducted from this perspective than that of behaviourism. Nevertheless, Kolb has sought to show through his learning style inventory and his learning cycle that human learning is both an experiential and a reflective process. In this he also finds support amongst many adult educators; both from the radical domain and from the more conservative, from Freire (1972a, 1972b) and from Knowles (1978, 1980). While Knowles discusses learning in the former of the publications mentioned, he does not actually produce his own definition. Rather he demonstrates that he supports a humanistic approach without the precision of an accepted definition. Kolb's definition, however, is clearly stated and, consequently, it is open for discussion. From this definition, Kolb proceeds to show how he believes that there are four forms of knowledge and that each of these relate to his learning cycle and to the learning style of the learners. Since considerable discusion is devoted to his learning cycle in the following chapter it is not considered necessary to explore it all here. However, the strength of his approach lies in the fact that he actually starts with human beings and he assumes that the process of thought is not a delusion nor completely controlled by the environment and, thereafter, he seeks to show what he considers learning to be. It is possible to criticise him on his existentialist assumptions. Indeed, empirical sociologists, amongst other scholars, might do just this, but the phenomenologists would not. Hence, it is important to recognise that there are fundamentally opposing perspectives in the social sciences about how phenomena should be analysed. Since these distinctions cannot be resolved here, it is necessary to recognise the

philosophical foundations of Kolb's position, and indeed of that adopted here, and then return to an analysis of his definition.

Perhaps the major criticism of Kolb's definition is that it implies that learning is a singular process and that the outcome is always knowledge. Marton and Saljo (1984) report on a number of recent studies of learning and demonstrate that it is a very complex process but one in which individuals' strategies differ, with some students seeking holistic approaches to their learning and others being more atomistic. However, one significant aspect about their paper is that they record how Saljo's research demonstrated that adults have five qualitatively different approaches to learning:

- a quantitative increase in knowledge

- memorising

- the acquisition of facts, methods, etc, which can be retained and used when necessary

- the abstraction of meaning

- an interpretative process aimed at understanding reality (Marton and Saljo, 1984, p. 52)

One significant aspect of this research is that it suggests that there may be more than one type of learning process and that it does point to the fact that the level of cognition differs with different learners. These different approaches to learning are very important and will be referred to again in a subsequent chapter.

It was also implied above that learning may not only have a cognitive outcome. If, for instance, the climate has been set which is conducive to learning, in the way that Knowles (1984), among others, suggests, then the learner may learn to associate learning with 'feeling good', so that an affective outcome may also be learned. However, this does raise a major conceptual difficulty, since learning and conditioning may be regarded a fundamentally different. Perhaps the point at issue here is the level of conscious awareness being exercised by the learner during the process. But it is suggested that there is such a phenomenon as pre-conscious learning, which produces cognitive outcomes, and so it would be difficult to distinguish between preconscious cognitive and pre-conscious affective outcomes in the learning processes. The topic of the pre-conscious is one which will be returned to in the fifth chapter. Additionally, Kolb's definition omits the aspect of skills acquisition through practice, etc. implicit in the definition of Hilgard and Atkinson. Hence, it is considered necessary

to widen Kolb's definition and suggest that learning is the transformation of experience into knowledge, skills and attitudes, and to recognise that this occurs through a variety of processes.

Knowledge itself is a difficult concept to define since it is clear that knowledge is no single phenomenon and people arrive at a state of knowing through different processes and have different methods of verification of what they hold to be knowledge. For the sake of clarity Berger's and Luckmann's (1967, p. 13) definition of knowledge as 'the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess certain characteristics' is accepted here. In order to clarify the definition further it is now necessary to distinguish knowledge from attitude: the latter may be viewed as an enduring system 'of cognitions, feelings and action tendencies with respect to various objects' (Krech *et al.*, 1962, p. 139).

It should be noted here that a variety of processes are suggested rather than one single process, and it should be recognised from the outset that most people probably realise that many different learning processes exist. But if they were asked to explain what they meant by learning they would probably do so in terms of memorising information that was presented to them within the formal organisation of the school. This is a social definition of learning, a process that has been labelled as learning, so that it is essential to distinguish between the social and a conceptual definition.

Having thus examined the concept of learning and arrived at a definition which indicates something of the breadth of the phenomenon, it is now necessary to relate this to adult learning.

ADULT LEARNING

It is necessary from the outset to clarify a number of issues here, since adult educators have sometimes tended to confuse adult education and adult learning. It was easy to see how this could have occurred when learning was regarded as synonymous with enrolling on a course and attending formal education classes. However, since it is now recognised that self-directed learning is a common occurrence, it is important to regard education and learning as conceptually distinct phenomena. Indeed, it was claimed elsewhere (Jarvis, 1986, p. 8) that education may be regarded as the institutionalisation of learning. Hence, learning is a phenomenon in its own right and should be studied as such (see Merriam, 1986, for a full discussion of the literature relating to adult learning). It is now conceptually imprecise

to confuse education and learning in the manner that it has been hitherto in some adult education literature. The focus of this study is upon learning: education will only be discussed as an adjunct to it.

However, there is a far more important reason for discussing the concept of adult learning here and that is because some adult educators have tended to regard the process of adult learning as being different to that of child learning. It is necessary to review the debate that has occurred within adult education in order to clarify the issues involved here.

The debate really began as a result of Knowles's (1970) seminal study *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy* in which he contrasted adult learning (andragogy) to child learning (pedagogy). Andragogy may be defined as 'the art and science of helping adults learn' according to Knowles (1980, p. 43) and pedagogy as 'the art and science of teaching children' (ibid.). An immediate conceptual problem presents itself with these two definitions and that is that Knowles has not exhausted his possibilities, so that it might be asked what he would call 'the art and science of teaching adults' or 'the art and science of helping children learn'. However, it is not necessary to pursue this here, since these problems are implicit in the debate that followed. For Knowles, the theory of adult learning was based on four assumptions:

- the adult's self-concept is different to that of the child;
- adults have a reservoir of experience that they can bring to their learning and which acts as a rich resource;
- adults are ready to learn;
- adults have a problem-centred approach to learning whereas children are subject centred.

Obviously these assumptions are not grounded in rigorous empirical research nor based on a solid theoretical foundation. Indeed, more recently, Knowles (1984, p. 12) added a fifth assumption:

- adults are motivated to learn by internal factors rather than external ones.

Knowles is currently very clear that his model of andragogy is parallel to pedagogy and not antithetical to it, but the initial title to his book did suggest that they were opposing ideas. However, not all scholars actually accepted Knowles's original formulation. As

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early as 1972, Houle was gently critical of the two terms, but the main debate did not begin until a few years later. It commenced when McKenzie (1977) sought to provide Knowles's rather pragmatic formulation about adult learning with a more solid philosophical foundation, by claiming that andragogy was existentially orientated. He suggested that since adults and children are existentially different, andragogy and pedagogy are logically different. However, Elias (1979, p. 254) responded to this by claiming that this distinction is not necessarily significant since men and women are existentially different but that nobody claimed that 'the art and science of teaching women differs from the art and science of teaching men'. Feminists may not make such a claim! This, however, was not McKenzie's response; rather he accepted Elias's point but claimed that that this existential difference was insignificant in relation to the lifespan, whereas there was a significant difference between adults and children in this respect. While there may be some foundation in this point, it may be more related to experience than to age *per se*, and this will be argued more forcefully in the succeeding chapters.

It is not necessary here to review the remainder of this debate. Suffice to note that in 1979 Knowles chose to re-enter it, and this time he acknowledged that andragogy and pedagogy were not two discrete processes based upon age but that 'some pedagogic assumptions are realistic for adults and some andragogical assumptions are realistic for children in some situations' (Knowles, 1979, p. 53). Since then there have been few writers who have sought to distinguish andragogy from pedagogy on the grounds of age. Some writers, however, have been concerned to criticise Knowles's formulation of andragogy, in some cases on the grounds of its ideological rather than its psychological character, but since this is not really the concern of this section of the chapter it will not be pursued here. One writer, however, has raised an interesting point that does require consideration. Yonge (1985) has suggested that a difference between andragogy and pedagogy lies in the manner by which the learner is accompanied through the learning process by the teacher; with the child there is a relationship of trust, understanding and authority, but when the child matures the relationship changes. For Yonge, pedagogy highlights the childlike elements in the relationship whereas andragogy focuses upon the adult ones. Thus the way that the learner defines the total teaching and learning process may affect the process significantly: a child defining it in a dependent and 'obedience'-giving manner may seek to memorise the content of what is being taught but an adult, defining it differently, may question the validity, or the relevance, of

that content. Now this is an important point since it does not suggest that there is an intrinsic difference in the learning processes, only that there is a difference in the external processes that accompany the teaching and learning process. In short, there is a social difference rather than a psychological one. However, this social difference may actually result in a different learning process occurring; this will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. Even so, it is possible, briefly, to illustrate this point here. If a teacher expects a learner to reproduce the information that has been presented, then the learning process may merely be rote learning, whether the learner be a child or an adult. But if a teacher expects the learner to solve a problem, then the learning process may involve both reasoning and reflecting, irrespective of the age of the learner. However, there might be more likelihood of children being expected to reproduce and adults being expected to problem solve because of their respective statuses. Teachers may be less likely to expect conformity from adults, or even to encourage it. Hence, it is possible to see how the social conditions in which the learning occurs may be a constitutent causal factor in different learning processes occurring which relates to Yonge's position. Thus it is recognised here that adult learning may be no different from child learning, given the same social situation, so that the sub-title of this section, 'Adult Learning', relates only to the social status of the learner and not to intrinsically different forms of learning.

Finally, it must be recognised that for the purpose of this discussion the term *adult* refers to a social status rather than a biological age, since in some countries in the world adulthood is achieved at younger biological ages than in others. This point does demonstrate the significance of recognising that learning does not occur in social isolation and that the occurrence of different forms of learning may be the result of social and cultural pressures rather than biological differences alone.

THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF LEARNING

It will be clear from the above discussion that the position adopted here is that learning is not just a psychological process that happens in splendid isolation from the world in which the learner lives, but that it is intimately related to that world and affected by it. Indeed, Woodruff (1968, p. 197) made this point clearly in 1968 when he wrote that 'learning of all kinds begins with direct perception of something in life'. This is a position that is adopted throughout this

book. Hence, it is as important to examine the social dimension of adult learning as it is to understand the psychological mechanisms of the learning process. It is considered necessary here to spend a little time justifying this position, although it is not necessary to prolong the debate.

Every person is born into a society that has already established its own culture; a concept which may be regarded as the sum total of knowledge, values, beliefs, attitudes of the society, etc. This culture appears to be objective to the individual and is, in part, acquired by everyone in society through their socialisation process, and through other similar processes such as formal education. Because of the commonality of this phenomenon, culture appears to be objective but it is better recognised as objectified. The process of acquiring culture may be depicted simply by Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 The process of internalisation of 'objectified culture'
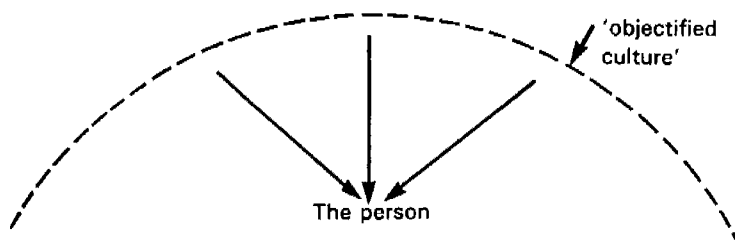
That no person is a total social isolate is a truism and it is through interaction with other people that the individual actually acquires this culture. The arrows in Figure 1.1 indicate the direction of the transmission in an interaction between an individual, who may be described as a learner, and any other person, who may be regarded as a teacher. But in other interactions, or even at another moment in the same interaction, the learner may become the teacher. Hence, it may be seen that every interaction may be regarded as a potential process of teaching and learning and in that interaction each participant may play both roles of teacher and learner, so that Figure 1.1 may be regarded as a little over-simple.

Additionally there are other processes through which a person learns about the culture of the society, such as exposure to the media and the reading of books, etc. Much of the discussion of socialisation tends to suggest that it is something that occurs only in childhood, but sociologists regard this initial process as primarily socialisation.

Secondary socialisation 'is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967, p. 150), so that learning may be regarded as something that occurs throughout the lifespan, whenever new experiences occur and new interactions take place.

As the individual grows and matures within the context of social living, the person becomes, in part, a reflection of the sum total of experiences that the individual has in society. But that culture is not a single undifferentiated phenomenon, it varies by socio-economic class, by ethnic community, by region and even by gender. Each of these differences may be treated as sub-cultures and so Figure 1.1 may be applied to each situation and the resulting acquisition will vary in accord with the objectified sub-culture that the individual internalises. Hence, every aspect of the person is social; even the language a person acquires is social. Bernstein (1971), for instance, showed how linguistic codes differed between children of different social class. He claimed (1971, p. 110) that his research showed that the two codes, elaborated and restricted, are 'functions of different social structures'. While his work has been criticised on methodological grounds, he has still highlighted the fact that there are different codes of speech related to different socio-economic groups in society. The extent to which language constrains thought, however, is of concern to this study. It will be discussed in the fifth chapter, and it will be shown that there is some relationship between the two, but that thought is not totally bound by one linguistic cultural mode of communication.

From the above discussion it is quite easy to understand why Lawton (1973, p. 21) regarded the curriculum as a selection from culture, since education is one of the means whereby that culture is transmitted to the individual learner. Obviously, Lawton's work has been undertaken within children's education, but his ideas are as relevant for adult education as they are for children's. For instance, culture need not only be class based but occupationally orientated as well, so that the curriculum in professional preparation is that selection of the professional sub-culture that is generally accepted as being worth transmitting to new recruits to that occupation by those who have power and responsibility in the profession.

However, the individual does not only inhabit a socio-cultural milieu. One other important dimension must be recognised; the temporal dimension. Not only is the person changing as a result of the experiences of social living, the socio-cultural milieu is also undergoing change. Hence, that over-arching depiction of objectified culture is itself an ever-changing phenomenon and therefore the objectified

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